Can the research on language planning be also planned?: Recent academia-government interactions in China

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Can the research on language planning be also planned?: Recent academia-government interactions in China

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ABSTRACT

The current Language Policy and Planning (LPP) literature does not differentiate between LPP as practical planning and LPP as a research area. This lack of a conceptual distinction has led to difficulties in explaining the contradiction of the lethargic status of *LPP-research* and the vigorous reality of *LPP-practice*. This paper concentrates on LPP-research and proposes that this seemingly self-dependent activity is also subject to management. The past decade has witnessed an upsurge of government encouraged LPP-research in China. The case of China demonstrates how government management can affect research through the institutionalisation of academia, specifically by establishing research centres, providing funds, creating publishing platforms, and training young researchers. A series of papers initiated by the Chinese government prove that LPP-research management can influence not only research activities but also LPP-practice and language practice by converting the ideology of the LPP practitioners and the general public. However, the government can only best exert its influence when all three factors are present; namely, social needs, financial support, and cooperative academia. Our discussion of LPP-research management in China could also be applicable to other parts of the world, especially where academia (or part of it) works closely with the government.

Introduction

The academia-government relationship is complicated, especially with greater reliance on technocracy becoming a trend in modern governance (Scicluna & Auer, 2019). While experts' technological schemes are increasingly seen as 'solutions' to organisational or other social problems (Gillingham, 2019), intellectuals are supposed to be sceptical of governments' role in areas where technologies are less value-free. The 'academic independence' discourse obliges researchers to avoid external influences. However, researchers generally cannot support an ideal independence; their academic careers or livelihoods rely on sponsorship and grants from politicians or businesses. This allows governments

to support particular valued research, encourage preferred outcomes and views, and possibly, suppress opinions they dislike (Barnes, 2018).

However, in Language Planning and Policy (LPP), some have discussed a turning 'against state action' of the specialists (Jernudd & Nekvapil, 2012, p. 27), but does this mean the researchers no longer participate in governments' LPP work, or LPP research be free of governments' influence? In the People's Republic of China (PRC), the past decade has witnessed astonishing government-encouraged growth in LPP research. Based on this case, this paper intends to examine the government's (potentially) dominant role in LPP research by proposing the concept of 'LPP-research management' to assert that governments can exert preferences on LPP research activities.

Theory and background

The concepts of LPP-practice, LPP-research, and LPP-research management

The current LPP literature uses LPP as an umbrella term covering individual/organisational planning work and academic research activities. Wright (2004) discusses LPP mostly as legal and policy measures; Johnson (2013) focusses on theories, concepts, and research methods; and Ricento (2006) covers both theory and practice. This mixture is convenient for general discussion but inevitably causes ambiguities in in-depth explorations. We start, therefore, by explicitly differentiating *language planning as practice* from *language planning as a discipline*. The former, activity promoting linguistic changes, is ancient; the latter, related to the study of language changes and underlying driving social forces, is a relatively new discipline established in the 1960s and 1970s (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, pp. x–xi). This differentiation justifies the description of recent LPP development as 'from practice to theory' (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997) and echoes Bianco's distinction between *real-world LPP* and *studies of LPP* (Bianco, 2018). We term the former *LPP-practice* and the latter *LPP-research*.

The relationship between these concepts is hierarchical. Specifically, LPP-research takes LPP-practice as its target. The Europe-originated LPP theory Language Management Theory (LMT) distinguished between the *generation of utterances* and *management of utterances*: the former means the production and reception of discourse, the latter aimed to change discourse production/reception (Jernudd & Nekvapil, 2012, p. 23). By definition, LPP-practice relates to *management*, taking language practice as its target (causing language practice changes). LPP-research, however, takes LPP-practice as its investigation object (studying the forces driving language changes). LPP-research's purpose is not limited to explaining human creativity in LPP (Tollefson, 1991), but also to influence LPP's social processes' outcomes (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Thus, if LPP-research affects LPP-practice and, ultimately, language practice, are there driving forces behind the research?

Research has proven the government's vital role in directing academia's work for industry (Dreier et al., 2018). Hold (1984, pp. 215–216) found that 'cooperation between industry and academia is not viable without direct or indirect financial support by the government' and the output of industry-government-academia cooperation usually depends on 'the attitude of the government concerning the scientific research,' confirming that governments influence academia. It also reveals how: funding. All governments spend money with specific intentions (Albury, 2019), and Goldfarb (2008) demonstrated that in

1998, over 96% of US federal R&D funding came from mission-oriented agencies; even funding for universities classified as basic research often has explicit goals. Scholars in early language-planning efforts served political goals, including strengthening state unity and order (the French Academy), aiding national movements (Slovak and Norwegian), and creating new languages for ethnic groups (USSR; Jernudd & Nekvapil, 2012, pp. 18–21). The earliest LPP-research activities in post-colonial Africa were sponsored by the Ford and Rockefeller foundations, investigating language situations in newly independent developing nations where new political systems might be formed (Jernudd & Nekvapil, 2012, p. 23). These US-based foundations are known not to be value-free institutions dedicated to philanthropy but are defenders of liberal values and exporters of American ideals (Walker, 2018). The Ford Foundation was noted as the 'best and most plausible kind of funding cover' for the CIA (Saunders, 1999, pp. 134–135). LPP-research may have been interwoven with political intentions from the start; thus, we can legitimately ask researchers whose interests they represent (Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987). When academia's work caters to external intentions, LPP-research is being managed or planned.

Following the LMT definition of *language management* (Nekvapil & Sherman, 2015), we define *LPP-research management* as activities aimed at LPP-research, intending to influence the latter at both supra and infra levels: (1) purpose, scope, and topics of the research or whether research should be conducted; (2) researchers, methods, and (possibly) how the findings will be structured or expressed. Management can be explicit or implicit, usually implemented by institutions that the government trusts.

If LPP-research can be managed, can it also be considered a kind of LPP-practice, and can it be integrated into current LPP theoretical frameworks? The scope of LPP-practice was delimited in the 1970s as 'deliberate language changes … that are planned by organizations that are established for such purposes or given a mandate to fulfil such purposes' (Rubin & Jernudd, 1971, p. xvi) and illustrated by Cooper as 'deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes' (Cooper, 1989, p. 45). Although linguists were once designated 'the key role of planners' (Jernudd & Nekvapil, 2012, p. 24), research activities were never explicated in classic LPP theoretical models. Kaplan and Baldauf's (1997) status-corpus-acquisition-prestige framework, Spolsky's (2004) practices-beliefs-management trichotomy, and LMT's management procedures (Nekvapil & Sherman, 2015) ignored academic research, although many linguists were once important planners. These research activities were perhaps not treated as LPP-practice because they do not directly affect language practice, or in Kaplan and Baldauf's (1997) words, LPP-research does not work as one 'approach to the goal'. However, LPP-research covers all dimensions of LPP-practice, and research results may influence all approaches to all LPP goals. The management of LPP-research is, thus, meta-planning in LPP, indirectly influencing LPP-practice, and ultimately language practice. An investigation of *LPP-research management* facilitates better understanding of LPP-practice and LPP-research.

The claimed alienation of academia from government in LPP-research and on-going cooperation in LPP-practice

LPP-research began in the 1960s, when linguists were invited to help post-colonial African and Asian countries with nation-building (Wright, 2004). Government-scholar relations

were amicable during this two-decades-long 'classic planning' period (Ricento, 2000); governments expected experts to devise rational plans to contribute to nation-building, and theoreticians relied on governments to allocate 'resources to the attainment of language status and corpus goals' (Fishman, 1987; cited in Jernudd, 1993, p. 133). This trust was evidenced by pioneering scholars' early definitions of 'language planning' as a deliberate systemic language change enacted by governing bodies, believing that 'governments could act efficiently and satisfactorily' (Jernudd, 1997, p. 132). LPP-research, like any science, was believed to be free from ideological and sociopolitical constellations (Ricento, 2000). Theoretical constructions followed a structuralist philosophy, putting governments at the core and admitting the central role of official languages.

The harmonious relationship soured in the late 1970s when the planning results were unsatisfactory for both sides. For the governments, the experts often ran into counterpressures of demographic situations and emotionally powerful factors including nationalism, identity, and power (Spolsky, 2012, p. 4). The linguists were disappointed when the 'institutions associated with governance and the state upheld inequality and supported a hegemonic world order' (Jernudd & Nekvapil, 2012, p. 27). The previous structuralist research paradigm usually proposed a language hierarchy with minority languages at the bottom (Tauli, 1974, p. 51), a covert solidification of social and economic inequality (Tollefson, 1991). Sociolinguistic studies then turned against state actions, and positivistic linguistic paradigms and structuralist concepts have increasingly been challenged (Jernudd & Nekvapil, 2012; Johnson, 2013, p. 30).

From the 1980s, critical theory's influence grew. Critical paradigms sought more democratic policies to reduce inequality and protect minority languages (Tollefson, 2006). Prominent researchers, including Jernudd and Neustupný (1987), reemphasised that different social groups have different interests and that governments should not conduct language planning on behalf of an entire society. Sociolinguistic attention was directed to power configurations that use language to instantiate, realise, and shape social reality (Kress, 2001, p. 35). Consequently, academia's understanding of 'language planning' shifted from something solely imposed by governments to myriad activities in multiple contexts and various levels (Johnson, 2013, p. 33). Researchers no longer 'rel[ied] on governmental committees to solve language problems' (Neustupný, 2012) but encouraged micro-level simple management actions that can snowball to organised management at the societal or governmental level (Cooper, 1989, p. 38; Jernudd & Nekvapil, 2012). A clear divide between academia and governments emerged during this period.

Labels for this movement vary, including, among others, 'from planning to management' (Jernudd, 1993; Nekvapil, 2006), 'from positivistic/technicist to critical/postmodern' (Ricento, 2000, p. 208), and 'from macro to micro' (Baldauf, 2006). One development associated with this transition is the change of the agency in planning, or 'the role(s) of individuals and collectivities in the processes of language use, attitudes, and ultimately policies' (Ricento, 2000, p. 208). The subsequent focus of LPP-research moved from government to communities and individuals. Academics no longer emphasised finding optimal strategies for government-initiated action but sought micro-level solutions for linguistic problems (Jernudd, 1993). This development marks the profound alienation of LPP researchers from the state, creating a multi-dimensional shift in many contexts (Hogan-Brun, 2010; Liddicoat & Taylor-Leech, 2014), including China (Zhao & Shang, 2016, p. 33).

However, a closer observation indicates that the divergence was not absolute. Governments continue to be the primary LPP-practice implementers, with help from scholars. In 1986, when Western linguists began discussing turning away from LPP, the OAU (Organisation of African Unity) adopted the *Language Plan of Action for Africa* with an objective 'to release the African populations from their excessive dependence on foreign languages … by progressively replacing these languages with carefully selected local African languages'. It was results of the work that African political organisations had entrusted to African scholars. In 1997, language specialists gathered at the Inter-governmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa to provide new recommendations (accepting the colonial languages) to the Ministers of Culture and Education (Alexander, 2009). In 2000, the African Union, the OAU's successor, established the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) to actively work with other regional organisations including the Southern African Development Community for developing and promoting African languages (Ndhlovu, 2013). Seemingly, the political powers have always deployed academic resources to work towards their LPP-practice goals. Though the LPP-research literature began to display overwhelming stress on individual or bottom-up management activities aiming to seek micro-level patterns that shape the whole system (Johnson, 2013, p. 33), governmental LPP-practice has always been implemented with experts' assistance. In Europe, where the critical theories originate, discourse on linguistic human rights supporting dominated language users permeates official documents. Rather than challenging previous governing patterns, this is in line with the political purposes of preventing Central and Eastern European conflicts (Packer & Siemienski, 1999). Meanwhile, the enforcement of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* relies primarily on experts, both for national governments in preparing reports and the international organisations assessing them (Grin, 2003). Western European central governments including France and Germany have supported domestic orthography reform and the spread of national languages abroad; in such cases, linguists are normally consulted (Ball, 1999). Governments of new Central and Eastern European countries also encourage specialist participation in efforts to enhance nation construction (Csergo, 2007). Many scholars – François Grin, for example – have been working with governments or international bodies in normative efforts (Grin, 2003). This begs the question: has academia really remained aloof from the power centres?

Chinese LPP-research management: the recent past

The case of China, where the government explicitly organises research, may illuminate the discussion of the relationship between LPP academia and the government. The Chinese government still works as the main traditional authority allocating 'resources to the attainment of language status and corpus goals' (Fishman, 1987, p. 409; cited in Jernudd, 1993, p. 133). China's thousand-year-long history of central rule bequeathed it a strong central planning tradition involving direct guidance or interventions to shape specific social sectors (Chen & Naughton, 2016). Although China has pursued modernisation for over a century – reflected in the government's official political discourse – China has not yet entered a postmodern era where critical discourse prevails in academics (Zhao & Shang, 2016, p. 33), especially in comparison to societies such as the Czech Republic that are considered modern rather than postmodern regarding language management

(Neustupný & Nekvapil, 2003, p. 221). The Chinese government has more influence than linguists on language policy and planning (Spolsky, 2014). However, the state relies heavily on professional advice for various major goals, including those explicated in the successive 'Five-Year Plans for Language Work' by the State Language Commission (SLC).

The close government-expert link comes from the Soviet experience, incorporating small numbers of trusted experts into inside planning, and it is also reminiscent of early Western 1960s planning when linguists were treated as neutral technicians (Jernudd & Nekvapil, 2012), although China fundamentally differs from both. Alert socio-linguists warn researchers not to accept white, male, and European perspectives uncriti-cally, to avoid the creation of blind spots or marginalisation of other ways of being and knowing (Heller et al., 2018, p. 5). China is, thus, a suitable object of observation, distant from the Western centre, with its own cultural and political traditions; it is less influenced by the critical approach in social sciences. This paper aims to explore how much and how a government can be involved in LPP-research and its implications for research and planning practices in China and elsewhere. A brief scan reveals that in China, academia is highly mobilised and institutionalised, presenting itself in four areas: academic centres, research funds, publication platforms, and young researcher training.

Establishing LPP-research centres

In China, most academic institutions are state-owned; they work within one governing mechanism and serve one ultimate end. Since 2004, the SLC, as a coordinator, has been establishing research centres nationwide, to integrate scattered academic resources and address pressing national needs. There are now at least 19 centres focussing on five major areas (SLC, 2017, pp. 60–62), not including several planned new ones (Table 1):

Table 1. SLC research centres in China.

No.	Categories and Names	Year Created
A	Strategic language policy/planning	
1	China Centre for Linguistic and Strategic Studies	2007
2	Research Center for Strategic Studies of Foreign Languages	2011
3	National Research Center for Chinese Language Standards	2012
4	National Research Center for Language Policies	2013
5	Research Center for Chinese Language and Social Development	2014
B	Language digitalisation/artificial intelligence	
6	National Language Resources Monitoring & Research Center for Print Media	2004
7	National Language Resources Monitoring & Research Center for Broadcast Media	2005
8	National Language Resources Monitoring & Research Center for Internet Media	2005
9	National Language Resources Monitoring & Research Center for Minority Languages	2008
10	Research Center for Linguistic Intelligence of China	2016
11	Research Center of Multi-lingual Digitalisation in Xinjiang	2017
C	Chinese language/text standardisation	
12	National Language Resources Monitoring & Research Center for Textbooks	2005
13	Research Center of Overseas Chinese Language	2005
14	Research Center for Chinese Language Collection and Standardisation	2005
15	Center for Chinese Font Design and Research	2005
16	Chinese Lexicography Research Center	2007
D	National language capacity/language education	
17	Chinese Language Proficiency Test Research and Development Center *(terminated in 2017)*	2012
18	National Research Center for State Language Capacity	2014
E	Language resources protection/development	
19	Center for Protection and Studies of Chinese Language Resources	2015
20	Center for Development and Application of Chinese Language Resources	2015

These centres are needs-driven, and they receive annual funding and regular SLC performance assessments. In 2016, they produced 47 consultation reports, 276 research papers, 70 written or edited books, and 77 academic journal issues, and in 2016, they were assigned 78 new projects (SLC, 2017, p. 63). They publish typical research findings to the scholarly public and submit specific issue-focussed internal consultation reports for government departments.

Some universities who recently established degree programmes in LPP also contribute to field design. Previously, LPP researchers were mostly professors and doctoral students in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. In 2012, however, three Chinese universities, Shanghai International Studies University, Beijing Foreign Studies University, and Beijing Language and Culture University, created a new sub-discipline, Language Policy and Planning, thereby officially declaring LPP a recognised field in Chinese higher education.

Increasing LPP-research funds

Funding allocations indicate government preferences, and the rapid growth of the number and extent of LPP grants and funding has facilitated many large-scale investigations. According to Su (2016), from 2005 to 2014, a total of 4272 language-related research projects were funded by the five major Chinese science funds, covering many varied topics, all reflecting current national demands. The National Natural Science Fund favours language digitalisation technologies and standards; the National Educational Science Fund focusses on language education; and the National Social Science Fund, the MOE's Humanities & Social Science Fund, and the State Language Commission Fund prioritise corpus studies to solve community-related communication problems. The government favours directly applicable research, as 2414 projects (60.85%) work on language-related social issues. Of these, 315 (18.68%) conduct language situation surveys covering sociolinguistic issues, including media, justice, military, medical care, public domains, business, academia, technology, and Internet language, with focusses such as urbanisation and internal migration. Another 806 (47.81%) cover language education, including native/foreign/minority language education and teaching Chinese as a second language. Another 94 (5.58%) examine policy to provide direct proposals for government, including studies of overseas polities. Almost all 31 provincial governments provide research funds for local or specialised needs. As each project lasts 2–4 years, the number of such research projects at any time totals over 1000.

Importantly, the government controls the funding flow; therefore, it defines the national demands. One clear manifestation of this is funding application guidance. The SLC and other national funding committees collect recommended topics from government departments, universities, and other institutions to design the guidance containing a list of potential topics, which is refined by the funding provider. Most applicants bid using topics from the list to increase their success probability. In 2017, most of the 100 projects created by the SLC (76%) were associated with targets in the 13th 'Five-Year Plan' (SLC, 2017, p. 58). The government thereby defines national mainstream research. Furthermore, as a record of hosting government projects is vital for academic promotion, those who are rejected likely adjust their research directions to ensure future success.

Creating LPP publication platforms

Five Chinese LPP-specialist journals were founded on growing research findings during the last decade, and the SLC, unsurprisingly, is involved. *China Language Strategies,* edited by the China Centre for Linguistic and Strategic Studies and affiliated with Nanjing University, which is renowned for its strength in sociolinguistics research, appeared in 2012. In 2014, the *Journal of Language Policy and Language Planning* emerged, edited by the National Research Center for State Language Capabilities, and affiliated with Beijing Foreign Studies University. In October 2015, two journals appeared: *Language Policy and Language Education,* edited by the National Research Center for Foreign Language Strategies affiliated with Shanghai International Studies University; and the *Journal of Language Planning* edited by the National Research Center for Chinese Language Standards affiliated with Beijing Language and Culture University. In January 2016, the *Chinese Journal of Language Policy and Planning* (*CJLPP*) was established by Commercial Press, a leading Chinese academic publishing house. Due to Commercial Press's connections and resources, this journal has become the most active and publishes bimonthly.

These journals publish in Chinese with English abstracts; but English texts rarely appear. Chinese scholars constitute the editorial boards, but some Western scholars have also been invited: CJLPP's editorial board features major Western LPP scholars including Thomas Ricento, Ofelia Garcia, Nancy Hornberger, Elana Shohamy, Joseph lo Bianco, and Jan Blommaert. Furthermore, the 19 research centres also regularly publish findings. Counting these internal reports and informal publications, there are 15 regular publications altogether (SLC, 2018, p. 134). Considering publishing's relatively strict regulations, this mushrooming of journals reflects encouraging government attitudes towards LPP research. Importantly, all these journals are edited by SLC-established research centres and claim to serve national needs. The *CJLPP* declares on its website that its aim is to coordinate between academia, society, and government. Thus, these journals' emergence testifies to academia's recent flourishing and proves the SLC's management capability.

Training young LPP researchers

Recent years have witnessed wide participation of researchers in LPP, including new university graduates and researchers transferred from abroad. Chinese university enrolment has expanded rapidly since 2000, and in 2016, 7392 students received doctoral degrees from 793 graduate institutions in social sciences including Education, Linguistics, and Literature.[1] Thus, there is a large supply of high-quality individuals. Meanwhile, significant numbers of researchers have been attracted to LPP from other areas. In 2017, 6011 people benefitted from 63 SLC-organised training programmes for language workers (SLC, 2018, p. 153), and the 19 SLC research centres held 102 seminars or conferences (SLC, 2018, p. 135). Since 2017, the SLC has sent around 30 young LPP scholars for academic training in the UK annually to improve communication with the international academic community (SLC, 2018, p. 140). Additionally, the SLC built a database of experts for consultation; by 2016, 886 were listed (SLC, 2017, p. 64). All are affiliated with publicly-funded institutions and, to a certain extent, work with organised larger projects. Spolsky (2014)

once noted 'linguists and a strongly developed cadre of sociolinguists have played a useful role' in this upsurge, while 'the driving force has been the Communist leadership'.

From LPP-research management to LPP-practice: the paper series

Under direct SLC guidance, four series of Papers (Green, Yellow, Blue, and White) have recently been compiled in China, presenting current LPP progress to the general public, government officials, and academia, and more importantly, to inspire Chinese LPP-practices.

Green paper: steering official Chinese LPP-practice

The Green Paper series aims to regulate people's behaviour by issuing soft language use norms and raise public language awareness by providing a comprehensive description of the national language situation, or 'language life'. Composed of two sub-series, A contains collections of normative language standards while B presents annual descriptions of various linguistic domains.

Sub-series A is more prescriptive, although norms are usually draft regulations. Some collections include *A Collection of Commonly Used Modern Chinese Words* (*Draft*; 2008); *Pronunciation Standards for Chinese Characters in Japanese* (*Draft*; 2009); *Proficiency Criteria and Test Guide for Putonghua in Tourism* (*Draft*; 2014); *A Collection of Chinese Words in Pinyin* (*Names; Draft*; 2015); and the *Scheme for the Latinization of the Tibetan Language* (*Draft*; 2015). As these regulations are drafts, rather than demanding obedience, they test public opinion to be considered in revised versions.

Since the first sub-series B book was published in 2006, another 19 have been added, most with the same title, *Language Situation in China* (2006, … , 2019). Each has nine parts, each a facet of Chinese language management, including high-ranking officials' speeches, topics that have provoked heated discussions, the year's words in media coverage, and the use of Chinese in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan. In 2018 and 2019, metropolises including Beijing and Guangzhou also published Green Paper Books on local language, indicating a possible trend. The SLC has also been active in international exchanges and co-operation, introducing the Green Paper to overseas readers. Selected parts have been published in English by De Gruyter (Li & Wei, 2006, 2014, 2015), as well as in Korean (Li & Choo, 2015) and Japanese (Yang et al., 2017). The Green Paper itself is an LPP-research product but functions as an important guide for public language practices.

Yellow paper: overseas reference objects for LPP-practice

In a globalised era, a proper understanding of China is impossible without being aware of external situations. After a few trials, the Yellow Paper adopted the title *Language Situation in Foreign Countries* in 2018. This newly edited collection arranges papers into six categories: (1) Language situation, salient language issues in some countries; (2) language policy, the latest policy moves around the world; (3) current trends, the newest changes indicating future directions; (4) words and phrases, words of the year in major economies; (5) annual reports, from internationally active organisations like the British Council,

Alliance Française, or King Sejong Institute; and (6) appendices, including major events, newly published books, and news reports.

According to Li Yuming, former SLC Deputy Director, the Yellow Paper produces an extensive exploration of the outside world, providing three benefits: facilitating comprehension of China by introducing broader experiences; advancing China's global integration by providing valuable information concerning language use in targeted economies; and promoting China's LPP research development by accumulating cases for theoretical exploration (Li, 2016). By providing related information for government officials and researchers, the Yellow Paper inspires China's LPP-practice.

Blue paper: abstracting China's applicable LPP-research

The Blue Paper re-organises Chinese research findings in a reader-friendly way so government officials can understand the latest LPP-practice developments.[2] The chapters are organised according to the 'Outline of China's National Plan for Medium- and Long-Term Language Enterprise Reform and Development (2012–2020)' and the '13th Five-Year Plan' of the State Language Commission. In 2017, six of the eight chapters corresponded directly to the major tasks established in these two documents: standard language promotion, language normalisation, language protection, language education, language spreading, and language services. The other two cover LPP theories and national strategy, addressing national and overseas designs. This makes it convenient for digesting new opinions and data collected by Chinese scholars. The report also evidences the recent upsurge of China's LPP research: the 2017 version includes elements of 529 publications exclusively produced by Chinese authors; the 2016 report[3] collected 407, and the 2015 report[4] collected 443 publications, including journal papers, conference reports, degree theses, news reports, and newspaper column comments.

White paper: highlighting China's LPP-practice advances

The White Paper is especially important as a review of the fulfilment of tasks established in the 'Five-Year Plans' of national language work, with the SLC directly involved in editing. Six areas were covered in the first two reports (2017, 2018): national standard language promotion, language standardisation/digitalisation, language service capability, inheritance/spreading of preeminent Chinese language and culture, construction of a language governance mechanism, and language resource protection. It is an authoritative source of information concerning China's language planning progress in China. For example, around 2200 language-related laws and regulations have passed since the PRC's establishment in 1949; dozens were issued in previous years to normalise Chinese language usage; 58 technological standards were issued for digital processing of Chinese and minority languages and 46 documents to promote sign language and braille standardisation; and a five-year project was launched to conduct 1500 linguistic surveys, including 300 for minority languages, 900 for Chinese dialects, 200 for endangered languages, and 100 for dialect cultures (SLC, 2017, p. 106). Critically, the White Paper sets the tone of China's language management and displays LPP-practice's philosophy and principles.

Driving forces behind China's LPP-research management

LMT claims that language planning should not cover only narrow linguistic issues sense but include communicative and socioeconomic dimensions (Nekvapil, 2012). According to LMT, language phenomena are rooted in communicative settings and eventually influenced by socio-economics. To understand China, where large-scale planning of LPP-research can happen, an in-depth exploration of Chinese society is required. The enthusiastic emerging growth of China's LPP-research can be seen as a result of the combination of simultaneous socio-economic factors: a powerful centralised planning mechanism, pressing domestic and international challenges, recent economic success, and researchers' increasing willingness to co-operate.

Strong centralism tradition

From its 5000-year-long civilisation, China inherited a strong tradition of centralism that is perpetuated throughout society. The communist leadership after 1949 enhanced the central planning tradition in scientific research, duplicating the USSR's higher education system. As early as 1928, the Communist Party in the USSR passed a resolution that 'only with the Party and the great masses of workers and peasants mobilised to the greatest extent will it be possible to solve the task of technologically and economically catching up with and overtaking the capitalist countries' (Sun, 2014). The Chinese Party adopted the Soviet approaches characterised by central planning and bureaucratic management in scientific research (Suttmeier & Cao, 1999). Thus, Chinese universities are utilised as the state's educational and research arm for national socialist development; knowledge production has become an integral part of national efforts to fulfil the century-long dream of China's resurgence rather than arising from scholars' individual interests (Zha, 2012). In practice, scholars must affiliate with a system university or research institution, and no such institution can alienate itself from the state. Although some academics have recently advocated a language governance paradigm encouraging diverse agencies in language management (Zhang, 2009), LPP scholars generally accept the government's central role. This centralist tradition enables efficient use of material and personnel resources, and when resources are limited, such a system's advantages are especially evident.

Pressing language situation

As China becomes an international power, many language-related challenges have become increasingly frequent and visible; these have forced China to depend on expert solutions. The century-long pursuit of modernisation requires a national common language – in this case, Putonghua – which, despite decades of promotion, has only been mastered by around 70% of the population,[5] leaving it incomprehensible to over 300 million people in rural, ethnic, and remote areas (SLC, 2017, p. 1). Meanwhile, rapid economic growth has increased domestic worker migration. In 2017, 17.55% of the population (244 million) migrated from their registered city of residence.[6] This is changing the country's linguistic landscape profoundly, maybe forever. Simultaneously, rapid Internet development has created a new language-use domain – cyberspace; in 2016, over half of

China's population were Internet users.[7] Meanwhile, many poorly prepared Chinese enterprises rushing to invest abroad have encountered difficulties communicating with local customers. The government is aware that, as planners, allocating appropriate language-related resources nationally is vital for coping with these national and international challenges, and this can come only from a large team of experts working jointly.

One example indicating China's concern regarding the domestic language situation is that, in 2017, the government established 432 survey stations to investigate Chinese dialects (342) and minority languages (90), covering 30 provinces or central-direct-administrative municipalities (SLC, 2018, pp. 52–53). Such large-scale surveys require extensive participation by linguistics researchers and students.

Increasing financial support

China's tremendous economic growth means financial restraints on LPP-research have greatly eased. The Chinese economy enjoyed high growth rates for almost 40 years, surpassing Japan in 2011 to become the world's second-largest economy, making increased investment in scientific research possible. From 2010, investment in R&D has grown astonishingly: by 21.7% in 2010, by 23% in 2011,[8] and it has maintained an average annual increase of at least 10% since then. It was in approximately 2011 that the boom in LPP research first arose.

In 2016, the SLC initiated 100 research projects with funding from 50,000 to 200,000 RMB (approximately 7500–30,000 USD). In addition to 34 projects from the SLC, the 19 SLC research centres received another 44 research projects (100,000–400,000 RMB each, approximately 15,000–60,000 USD; SLC, 2017, pp. 58–63) from other sources. For example, Beijing Language and Culture University received an annual grant of 50 million RMB (7.4 million USD) from the Beijing municipal government for five consecutive years from 2016 to construct a high-end language resources centre. Other than academic project funding, significant sums are distributed for administrative needs related to research management. In 2016, the 32 Provincial Language Commissions received 28.95 million RMB (around 4.32 million USD) of regular budgeted resources; cities and provinces like Beijing, Yunnan, and Xinjiang received extra funding of 10.4, 14.9, and 28 million RMB (1.55, 2.22, and 4.18 million USD), respectively, for major projects (SLC, 2017, p. 144).

Favourable ideological context

The long-standing tradition of intellectuals serving the country created academia's co-operative attitude towards the government. In addition to serving their rulers, the Confucian doctrine of 'cultivating the self, regulating the family, governing the country, and leading the world into peace' nurtured in Chinese intellectuals a strong sense of responsibility for the collective well-being (Zha, 2012).

Since the Imperial period around 2000 years ago, Civil Service Exam success has been considered highly honourable, and the emperor nominated the best candidates to govern the people. Although this exam system was abolished in the early twentieth century, the tradition of serving the country with knowledge remains deeply rooted.

Social science scholars were long neglected following the PRC's establishment. Under Soviet influence, sociology teaching and research were suspended from 1952 as 'capitalist pseudo-sciences' (Ma, 1996, p. 46). The Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) saw the value of knowledge disregarded, and it was only after the Reform and Opening-up in 1978 that respect for intellectuals was restored. The tradition of serving the nation with knowledge was restored or even heightened because universities were opened to the masses for the first time in China's history, and the overall situation for social science researchers has been improving since 1978. LPP-research, closely related to policymaking, has received special support since the 2010s when the government called for scientific workers in Arts and Humanities to align their research with national needs. In this context, China's LPP-research suddenly became an area that continues to draw more attention than other linguistics divisions.

Discussion of LPP-research management based on China

Our discussion of China might have created false impressions requiring additional explanation: one is that the government appears able to control all LPP-research in an easy and harmonious manner; another is that the effects of LPP-research management will automatically transfer to LPP-practice; the third is that such impressive LPP-research management only happens in China where centralism prevails. Here, we examine these impressions further.

To what degree can governments influence academia in LPP-research?

The government's role is undoubtedly important in LPP-research, but it cannot induce immediate change. It can, at best, exert its influence only when all three above-mentioned factors are present: social needs, financial support, and cooperative academia. Regarding the complex issue of language, no government can control everything. The French and German governments spent decades promoting new orthographic schemes, yet both proceeded very slowly (Ball, 1999; Johnson, 2005). Similarly, the spread of Putonghua (standard speech) in China has been much slower than expected, especially in rural and remote areas. Other relative failures (for example, the maintenance of minority languages in economically developed areas) have proved that central-planning modes struggle when in unfavourable social conditions. Thus, it is unwise to attribute recent positive progress to the government alone. Spolsky (2014, p. e175) noted: 'As in economic and other planning processes, the assumption that all that is involved is the implementation of centrally determined plans has been shown to be invalid'.

Of the three conditions, academics' attitude is the most difficult to manage. As well as serving their country, Chinese intellectuals have a strong tradition of criticising their rulers. In the Imperial period, many intellectuals bravely criticised the government; some saw being executed for such criticism as an ultimate honour. A common strategy used throughout history by Chinese intellectuals when political constraints are strict is non-co-operation – quitting the political game to pursue spiritual tranquillity in the countryside. In the decades following the establishment of the PRC, intellectuals were disregarded, not necessarily by their choice. However, since the 1990s, improved financial and intellectual autonomy has led to more space for personal choices and career

development (Gu & Goldman, 2004). It is unlikely that the government could force researchers to accept work they deemed repugnant. Li Yuming advocated LPP-research for over two decades after becoming SLC Deputy Director in 2000, but the recent growth happened after he left in 2012. The government can only encourage, not compel, researchers, to co-operate: even now, at least 25% of applications choose not to bid for government-assigned projects but to pursue individual interests (Su, 2016).

Furthermore, the relationship between the government and funding recipients is not problem-free. While government funding is welcomed, the utilitarianism accompanying government funding has been opposed by many. The centralised funding allocation management, paper publication, and fellowship granting can be somewhat influenced by the applicants' privileges, reputations, or even personal relationships (Zha, 2012), causing inequalities in resource distribution (Li et al., 2017). This can lead to promising projects proposed by young researchers being overlooked, eroding academic enthusiasm. Restraints on spending are another problem, as the regulations are so strict that it can be nearly impossible to spend the money without breaking some regulations, thereby undermining rather than strengthening control.[9] Internationalisation has opened up space for researchers, as they can obtain funding from international institutions and publish on international platforms. The research management system is far from perfect.

In what ways can LPP-research management affect LPP-practice?

Through research production, LPP-research management not only acts directly on LPP-research but also affects LPP-practice and, ultimately, language practice. The following table can illustrate the hierarchical relationship among LPP-related activities: beginning at the bottom with the distinction by LMT between language-practice and language-management (here, we use the term LPP-practice; Nekvapil, 2012); LPP-research management acts from the top on LPP-research, then on LPP-practice, then ultimately language-practice (Table 2).

Thus, how are the effects from the top, where LPP-research management happens, communicated to the bottom, where language is practised? This is a critical question whose appropriate and complete exploration would probably require a separate paper. Here, however, we provide a simple answer: through the changing of language beliefs or norms. According to LMT, management is based on the *norm* – the belief of correct language practice (Nekvapil, 2012). This is close to what Spolsky calls *language beliefs* – beliefs about language and language use (Spolsky, 2004, p. 5). In other words, LPP-practice is only necessary when the planner perceives deviation in language practice from their norms. Beliefs or ideology are the basis of all human activity, and these can be changed via information presented as objective scientific research.

Table 2. Hierarchical classification of LPP-related activities.

Activities	Classifications
LPP-research management	Management of the study of the management of the production and reception of discourse.
LPP-research	Study of the management of the production and reception of discourse.
LPP-practice	Management of the production and reception of discourse.
Language-practice	Production and reception of discourse.

In China, the Papers series exemplifies how LPP-research management can affect ideology. The SLC closely observes progress through officials' participation in editors' meetings and examination of the final product. Although these Papers do not contain practical suggestions for specific Chinese LPP problems, their information is edited as the SLC finds appropriate. The language beliefs of the target readers, including officials and the general public, are supposed to gradually change. It is similar to how censorship works in modelling public ideology. It is in this sense that Foucault's concept of 'naked power' in discourse is illustrated (Foucault, 1966/2005, p. 327) when he found that the production of discourse is controlled, selected, organised, and redistributed by certain procedures (Foucault, 1984, p. 109).

How can LPP-research management be applied globally?

Although it has a unique socio-political context, LPP-research management is not confined to China. Academia is commonly affected by outside influences, including industry and government, especially related to funding. In most countries (including the US), 'government research grants have often come from programmatic, mission-oriented agencies charged with achieving very practical goals' (Goldfarb, 2008, p. 41). The 'mission-oriented' nature of funding means funding-reliant research cannot escape being managed. LPP-research relies on public funding, making it more susceptible to government goals.

The other side is academic freedom, including the freedom to teach, learn, research, and publish (Zha, 2012). Academic independence in China does not appear as advocated by Western activists (Altbach, 2001). The Chinese government remains sensitive to anything it perceives as potentially harmful or inappropriate (Gu & Goldman, 2004). The public discussion of certain areas, including those related to LPP, is discouraged. However, there is also a widely cited governing principle: 'No taboos in academic research, but clear regulations on publication'.[10] Increasingly important academic research channels are 'internal reports' submitted to government departments. All the SLC centres submit annual consultation reports, which is also recognised as research work (for both job appraisals and career promotion) in Chinese universities. These reports set few limits on topics, and the writers can criticise any policy as long as their intentions are positive and related to national well-being. Academic freedom is vulnerable globally, too, including in democratic-claiming countries such as the US and UK (Barnes, 2018), as well as many less developed areas (Altbach, 2001), and in both the natural and social sciences (Barnes, 2018). These issues exist everywhere, the difference is just a matter of degree.

Some may question the integrity (and the work) of researchers who co-operate with governments, as intellectuals should be critical. However, since the Enlightenment, there has been a distinction between intellectuals as experts and intellectuals as socio-political critics, and the latter 'genuine' intellectuals have never composed more than a very small proportion of the whole (Gu & Goldman, 2004). Most LPP experts in China (Zha, 2012)

> appear to be content with – and even actively and deliberately seek – a high level of articulation between their academic pursuits and the national interest, rather than seeking to be independent and functioning as a critical voice in national or global affairs.

Chinese researchers also criticise, but criticise constructively, seeking the improvement of current policies. Realistically, around the world, we cannot expect all or even most researchers, in any discipline, to constantly criticise. They are all subject to ideological, institutional, financial, or corporate constraints, which the great majority are willing to tolerate to be able to conduct their work.

Indeed, complete academic independence may have never really existed in LPP research. In 1959, Charles Ferguson proposed the establishment of the Center for Applied Linguistics to provide expert guidance for the planning and implementation of US public linguistic policy (Spolsky, 2014). As LMT claims, all players involved in language management have their own interests (Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987), meaning there is no entirely independent academic research. That said, there is a growing awareness of encouraging multiple forces to engage in China's language management. The concept of 'governance' – a management mechanism involving agencies at all levels – has been introduced and accepted by leading scholars with government backgrounds, and the term is even used in the White Paper (SLC, 2017, 2018). If we admit the probability (or at least possibility) that researchers everywhere are influenced by outside forces, our analysis of LPP-research management is potentially globally applicable.

Conclusion

LPP academia has long possessed a love-hate relationship with the government. A good relationship rewards research with sufficient resources, first-hand data, and opportunities to test experimental schemes. Indeed, during the 1960s–70s honeymoon period with governments, LPP research generated some of the most important classic models; however, this close relationship may expose research to purposive government management, an issue seldom explored in current LPP literature.

Current LPP literature uses the term 'Language Policy and Planning' without clear differentiation between LPP as practical planning and LPP as a research area. This weakness of conceptual distinction and terminology led to a seeming contradiction: while the last three decades witnessed a 'weak state' and 'shrinking' of LPP as a research area, LPP as government practice has never declined (Bianco, 2018). The distinction between LPP-research and LPP-practice proposed here separates researchers' work into practical planning and academic exploration, differentiating researchers' identities as government-employed experts and independent academic workers.

We can summarise that China's LPP-research management can be realised through institutionalisation of academia, specifically through establishing research centres, providing funds, creating publishing platforms, and training young researchers. Such efforts can, somewhat, influence research output favourably for government LPP goals. The SLC's Paper series proves that management influences LPP-research, LPP-practice, and, ultimately, language practice by converting people's ideology. China's situation, however, does not allow us to exaggerate government influence in LPP-research as able to control everything. Even if the government is willing to invest, management is restricted by social conditions and the possibility of uncooperative academia. Additionally, China's peculiarities do not mean that LPP-research management is restricted to China, and LPP-research management exists globally, including in Western countries. In conclusion, the roles of governments and academia in LPP are far from being defined and finalised,

theoretically or practically. A deeper investigation would be beneficial for our understanding of the nature of LPP as both practice and research.

Notes

1. Ministry of Education of China, 'Numbers of Education in 2016,' retrieved from: http://www. moe.gov.cn/s78/A03/moe_560/jytjsj_2016/2016_qg/201708/t20170822_311599.html
2. Explanatory Remarks made by the editor of the Blue Paper (2015).
3. Foreword of the Blue Paper (2016).
4. Foreword of the Blue Paper (2015).
5. In the latest data, released by China's Ministry of Education on 19 September 2019, this figure has risen to 80%, although there is no reference to any specific census. Retrieved from: http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/s5147/201909/t20190919_399688.html.
6. National Bureau of Statistics, retrieved from: http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201802/t20180228_1585631.html.
7. National Bureau of Statistics, retrieved from: http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjzs/tjsj/tjcb/dysj/201709/t20170929_1539203.html.
8. National Bureau of Statistics, retrieved from: http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/tjgb/rdpcgb/qgkjjftrtjgb/.
9. Liu & Tian, March 12, 2015, 'Not to investigate unavoidably improper reimbursement of research funding' retrieved from http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2015-03/12/nw.D110000zgqnb_20150312_1-03.htm.
10. Speech by Xu Weixin, Vice-president of the Communist Party of China's Party School, in a press conference on July 6, 2016, retrieved from: http://www.china.com.cn/news/2016-07/06/content_38821008.htm.

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